

Newsletter for the Indiana Audubon Society **CARDINAL**

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UPCOMING EVENTS

3rd Annual Indiana Young Birders Conference
Cool Creek Nature Center
Carmel, IN
August 22, 2015

IAS Fall Festival
Allison Mansion at Marian University
Indianapolis, IN
October 2-4, 2015

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Dickcissel • Beverly D. Crone Restoration Area • Photo: John Lindsey



Keynote speaker

James Currie

Birding expert, conservation advocate, and host of Nikon's Birding Adventures TV and Nat Geo Wild's Aerial Assassins.

Join us for the 3rd annual

INDIANA YOUNG BIRDERS CONFERENCE

- Young Birder Presentations
- Young Birder of the Year
- Raffle Giveaways!
- Keynote speaker, James Currie



Find out more and register at
indianayoungbirders.org

August 22

At Cool Creek Nature Center, Carmel, IN

Conference Schedule

8 - 9:30am - Early morning birding with James Currie and Landon Neumann

8:30 - 10am - Conference Registration/Bird I.D. Quiz

10 - 11:30am - Young Birder Presentations

11:30am - 12:30pm - Lunch/I.D. Quiz Time

12:30 - 1:15pm - Keynote - James Currie

1:15 - 1:30pm - Break

1:30 - 2:00pm - Bird Rehabilitation Presentation

2:00 - 2:15pm - Young Birder/ Fledgling of the Year

2:15 - 2:30pm - I.D. Quiz Summary

2:30 - 3:00pm - Raffle Winners/ Closing Comments

Schedule is subject to change

From Trash to Treasure

Land-fill site restoration success in South Bend

By John Lindsey

A few years ago, reports from an old landfill site in South Bend began popping up on eBird as hosting birds that were on my needs list for the year. I was very excited to see that several grassland species that I would normally have to drive an hour or more to see were suddenly being reported within my home range. Henslow's Sparrow was on my annual list at the time, so I decided to make the short trip to South Bend in hopes to get a few year birds. Upon arrival, my first impression of the Beverly D. Crone Restoration Area was that it looked like a typical landfill. Nothing too special by any means. You will shortly find out how wrong first impressions can be. As soon as I opened my vehicle door, I was surprised to hear the insect-like vocalization of the Henslow's Sparrow. I had not gone as far as stepping a foot on this property and I was already treated to this elusive annual bird. It only gets better. After a short walk around the gravel trails, my wife and I had logged 6 Henslow's Sparrows, 2 Savannah Sparrows, a Juvenile Horned Lark, 2 Eastern Meadowlarks, 3 Dickcissels and a single adult Bobolink. We were hooked. Since then, the site has produced exciting species such as Sedge Wren, Blue Grosbeak as well as Vesper, Lincoln's and Grasshopper Sparrows. Local birder, Mike Bourdon, had this to say about the restoration area; "Walking trails make for easy access to see and hear a variety of grassland birds. I don't know of any other public area that finding Henslow's Sparrows is almost a gimme".

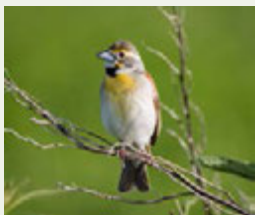
I have compiled data taken from eBird regarding this location for some of the more sought after species. I hope you can find time to visit this wonderful habitat. The parking area is on the corner of Jackson and Linden Road in South Bend, Indiana.



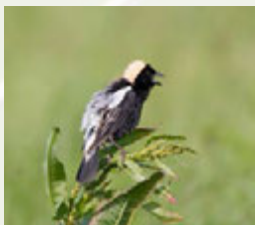
Henslow's Sparrows arrive the first week of May and stay through the first week of August. Their highest numbers can be observed in mid-July after the young birds have fledged. This is a known breeding species for this area and can be heard throughout their stay. The high count for this species is 19 on the 3rd of June, 2015 by John Lindsey.



Savannah Sparrows arrive in late April and stay through the last week of July. Their highest numbers can be observed at the beginning of July. After mid-July the species seem to leave this area. They can be heard and seen in several locations along the south central portion of the property. The high count for this species is 21 on the 11th of May, 2015 by Casey Zillman.



Dickcissels can be seen and heard singing starting in mid-May. They leave the first week of August. This is an easy bird to get at this property and while they are here are abundant throughout the park. The high count for this species is 26 on the 29th of July, 2013 by Casey Zillman.



Bobolinks start showing up the first week of May and leave the first week of August. Breeding was extremely successful in 2015 at this site and the average count for this bird went from 2 to 9 by the end of the season. The high count for this species is 25 on the 31st of July, 2015 by Jeff Timmons.

Osprey Numbers on the Rise

By Amy Kearns



Earlier this year, the Nongame Bird Technical Advisory Committee recommended that Osprey be removed from the state's list of endangered species, and placed on the special concern list. The proposal stated, "Delisting criterias has been reached with over 50 nesting territories for over three years, and the population is considered recovered. In 2014, we documented 68 nesting territories and 53 successful nests." If I understand the timeline correctly, Osprey will likely be removed from the state endangered list in 2017.

2015 is the fourth year in a row with over 50 Osprey nesting territories in Indiana. This year, we reduced our effort to one nest check in late June/early July instead of two checks. This year we checked 91 recent nest sites, documenting 69 nesting territories, 62 active nests with eggs laid, 59 successful nests, and at least 102 chicks fledged. A nest was counted as successful when a visit in late June/early July turned up an active nests with chicks. The count of 102 chicks fledged is likely an undercount. Osprey can have up to 3 chicks but observers are watching from the ground at a distance and chicks are not always visible at the same time, so many nests were reported simply as "chick(s)" and only 1 chick was tallied. Osprey will likely continue to increase their numbers in the state. Depending on the opinion of the new nongame bird biologist, IDNR may no longer coordinate and conduct annual nest checks but may move to a less frequent monitoring schedule.

Goose Pond FWA Visitors Center Update

Photos and article by Lee Sterrenburg

After years of discussion and plans and projections and delays the new office and visitor facility is finally launched and under construction at Goose Pond FWA.

The official ground breaking for the facility with Governor Mitch Daniels in attendance took place back on September 21 2012. My own first photos of dirt actually being turned for the road and construction are from April 29, 2015.

The building is not really a "Nature Center" if one has something in mind like the Nature Center at Dunes State Park. It is a Division of Fish and Wildlife Regional Office containing one large "common room" that will have several different uses, including conducting hunting draws. At present details on what interpretive and informational displays will be on the walls of the common room or outside at the parking lot and on building grounds are not known to the public. Presumably there will be some.

Former plans for a full-scale Visitor Center side have not materialized after years of ongoing budgetary issues and downsizing. There may be a full-scale visitor center with a video projection room, meeting rooms, and extensive historical displays sometime in the future.

For birders the major benefits (in addition to actual restroom facilities and a paved parking lot in which to meet up and leave vehicles etc.) might well be the great birding location. The building hill location off CR 400 S has the most magnificent view in the property. You can see almost everything in the Goose Pond basin from up there. The view looks immediately downhill upon managed Fields B and C.

We currently regularly use this hilltop location for weekly waterfowl surveys. It is a prime early AM locale for Christmas Bird Counts. We take people up there to get a feel and visual overview of the property. It is one of my favorite places in all of GPFWA. Now everyone will be able to share the grand overview and bird spectacle in season. A huge thanks to the DNR for making the hilltop site and facility possible. Announcements of the completion date will be forthcoming.



Mary Gray Welcomed Spring

By Carl Wilms



Another Spring Festival has passed our way and what a wonderful weekend it was! Preparations for the event are always a flurry of activity for the residents. Aside from preparing Markle Barn, Brooks Hall, and the campground, the trails and bridges were a primary concern. This spring saw the removal of the bridge built so that residents could park our cars in the campground and walk home while the lane bridge was built, and the construction of two others. New stairs were also installed on the steep hillside on the Woodpecker trail. A storm two weeks prior to the Festival also brought down a slew of trees, which rudely fell on trails. I experienced the storm sitting at my desk with a window viewing Brooks Hall.

I anticipated the approaching front, but I was not ready for the abruptness and severity with which it struck. There was a sudden, throaty, gush of wind with rain pouring from the sky. I could barely see Brooks Hall, a mere 40 yards away. The rumble of furniture being blown across the decks followed by the unmistakable earth-vibrating thumps of trees hitting the ground was over by the time I thought about taking shelter in the basement.

The resulting tree-falls were a rather harsh welcome to our new resident caretaker, Michael Hall. Trevor and Natalie Abernathy left the #1 residence in February after a 7-year tour of duty. Michael is a bird enthusiast and assists with bird banding operations at Heuston Woods State Park in Ohio and here at Mary Gray. He is also a new IAS Board member. We welcome his construction experience and his enthusiasm to be a steward of YOUR Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary.

Amy and I recently returned from a visit to a birding destination in Honduras. While the experience was fantastic from a birding perspective, the visit highlighted the importance of natural areas in all parts of our planet. The importance of IAS's Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary (and other nature preserves in N. America) as breeding grounds or rest areas for summer residents, cannot be stressed enough. During our vacation flights over the nation it was easy to note the lack of habitat that existed 200 years ago. Monocultures of crops, pastures, and cities, continue to expand and reduce the habitats needed for flora and fauna to flourish. I tip my hat to the IAS members who negotiated the establishment of Mary Gray in the 1940's with the generous offerings of Alice and Finly Gray. With vigilance and continued efforts by the IAS membership, we can maintain the important habitat at Mary Gray.

Children at Mary Gray

by Carl Wilms



A few school groups visited Mary Gray this past spring. Bill Cummings, former MGBS Committee Chair, coordinated a group from Indianapolis. The children were exposed to bird banding with Amy, Michael, and other volunteers setting a banding station on the porch of Brooks Hall. I presented a brief history of MGBS and a short lesson on the invasive properties of garlic mustard. The students then went to the wetland area to pull the fragrant but dastardly plant. They then enjoyed a bonfire (fueled by garlic mustard) and s'mores in the campground.

A Connersville Middle School team of teachers and students also came for a visit. The wonderful, and talented, Mark Booth (takeflight.org) presented birds of prey to the group. They loved his feeding the birds mice he kept in his pocket.

It is important to get children engaged in the natural world. If you know of teachers or students within a reasonable distance to Mary Gray, suggest to them to consider trip to Mary Gray. We will try to work with them to organize a memorable experience.

In Memory of Ray Sayre

by Carl Wilms

Over a year ago I received a phone call from Ray Sayre. Ray was a Connersville High School business teacher and long-time friend of the IAS along with his wife Janet; and after Janet's death, his second wife LaVerne. For years Ray served as treasurer for the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary during tight financial periods before his retirement and subsequent relocation to Arizona. During our chat Ray indicated that he wanted to make a gift to Mary Gray. He wondered if we still had the 1948 Ford 8-N tractor that Denzel Barricklow (former Resident Manager of MGBS) consistently nursed to life. Recalling the partnership between Denzel and the 8-N, I chuckled and told Ray that the tractor had been upgraded in 1997. We continued to talk for some time about Mary Gray and its role as an oasis for wildlife on our planet. Ray was happy to hear that IAS was continuing to operate the property.

I was informed of Ray's death a couple of months ago by his attorney in Arizona. I was also informed that the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary is a beneficiary in Ray's will along with the Nature Conservancy. Ray dedicated a memorial contribution to the MGBS endowment fund specified as the Mary Janet Sayre Memorial. Ray has also included the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary as his estate is finalized.

I am touched by Ray's generosity and dedication to the support and appreciation of nature's conservation. His prior gifts of time and skill helped guide the survival of Mary Gray in the past; his memorial gifts will do the same into the future.

IAS Fall Festival

October 2 - 4, 2015 • Allison Mansion at Marian University • 3200 Cold Spring Rd, Indianapolis, IN 46222

Schedule of Events

Friday, October 2nd

5:00 - 8:00pm

Festival Registration

7:15 - 7:30pm

Meeting Call to Order and Announcements

7:30 - 8:30pm

"The Fall and Rise of Indiana's Prairies" by Jim McCormac at Allison Mansion

Saturday, October 3rd

7:15am - 12:00pm

Indy North vs. Indy South Field Trip/Birding Competition

7:30am - 11:00am

Eagle Creek Field Trip/Birding Competition

7:15am - 11:00am

Cool Creek Field Trip/Birding Competition

7:45am - 9:45am

Nina Pulliam EcoLab Field Trip

11:00am - 1:00pm

Lunch on your own

11:30am - 1:00pm

IAS Board Meeting (open to all members)

1:00pm - 1:20pm

Presentation of Official Results of Morning Birding Competitions

1:30pm - 2:30pm

Bats of the World (featuring LIVE BATS)

2:15pm - 2:45pm

Bird Banding History and Results at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary

2:50pm - 3:10pm

Amos Butler Society Birdathon

3:15pm - 3:45pm

Ecorestoration and Bird Community Response at Jensen EcoLab

3:50pm - 4:20pm

Bird Community Studies at the HEE

4:30pm - 5:00pm

Celebrating the 10 Year Anniversary of Indiana DNR Management of Goose Pond FWA

6:30pm - 9:00pm

Dinner, Awards, Silent Auction & Keynote presentation

Allison Mansion at Marian University

Keynote Speaker: Dan Marsh, Director of Education, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden "Conservation Wins; A History of the Conservation Movement in the US and Around the World"

Sunday, October 4th

7:30am - 11:00am

Fort Benjamin Harrison Field Trip

7:30am - 11:00am

Eagle Creek Field Trip

7:30am - 11:00am

Cool Creek Field Trip

7:45am - 9:45am

Nina Pulliam EcoLab Field Trip

We look forward to seeing you at the IAS Spring Festival at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary and/or the IAS Dunes Birding Festival in May 2016!